



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

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Roger Smith to Assume IM System Administrator Position

By: E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) Communications Technician Roger Smith has accepted a position with Interoperability Montana (IM) as its new Radio System Administrator. Roger has served as the MHP representative to the board of IM Project Directors since December of 2006.

For the past two years, Roger has worked on the IM Project in several different capacities: he has been a member of both the IM Governance (IMGC) and Technical Committees (IMTC), and has served as a member of the IMTC three-person administrative committee. He also has been a member of the contract sub-committee as well as chaired the network design sub-committee. Roger has served on all the work groups that developed specifications for shelters, towers, generators, and microwave radios and was responsible for providing technical background for many of the IM's best practices.



In addition, Roger has performed invaluable field work by performing civil and microwave construction site walks, sign offs, and inspections; assisting with fleet mapping and Motorola inspections; and facilitating necessary details for getting sites built, such as permitting, land purchases, and easements.

For the past 14 years, Roger has been responsible for the MHP's statewide communications system and dispatch. Prior to this position, he worked in the private land mobile radio sector for 16 years. Roger is married and has four children. He is quite proud of the fact that his wife just earned her Bachelor's degree in business from Montana Tech.

In his new position, Roger will continue much of the work he already has been involved with, such as working with project management and facility managers to develop and build communications sites, helping to implement fleetmapping and business practices, and working with system

managers and state agencies to ensure that the IM system is properly maintained. Roger begins his new responsibilities on March 2. Welcome aboard, Roger.

I-15/90 Corridor Consortium Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The I-15/90 Corridor Interoperability Consortium met Thurs., Feb. 19, at the Butte Chamber of Commerce, and began with a technical committee report from Bob McWilliams, IM Technical Committee Chair. He informed the group about the decision to locate the second master controller at the new Autovon site near Glendive and also reported that a five-year build-out plan had been finalized and approved.

Bob also outlined the upcoming construction season for the consortium, and pointed out that waiting for FEMA to approve NEPA submissions on sites within the Southwest Loop that are funded with PSIC grant monies puts those projects at risk. Because of Montana's short construction season, if NEPA approvals are delayed, orders for towers, shelters, generators, etc. are then delayed, since they cannot be ordered until grant funds are secure. A 90-day turn around between orders and delivery is typical. Hence, if NEPA approval is delayed until May, for example, materials won't arrive until August or Sept., when the first snows of the season arrive, creating access problems. Fortunately, the Statements of Work (SOW) are completed for all eight sites within the Southwest Loop and contracts are in place with vendors. The construction contractor also visited all the sites last fall to ensure that the SOWs were thorough and complete, thus avoiding the potential for costly change orders. Bob is optimistic that the NEPAs will be approved soon.

Members also discussed the status of the Rumsey Mountain site. FCC licensing issues are still pending, but members are hopeful that the FCC will resolve these issues by the end of the month as promised in correspondence. Dan Sullivan, PSSB, provided some background information on the economic stimulus plan.

Mark Adams, Northrop Grumman, gave an overview of the Mobile Data Needs Assessment project. It is important to know what technologies will be needed by law enforcement, fire, EMS, hospitals, public works, and other local jurisdictions so that the IM can appropriately plan its network design for future bandwidth needs.



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Project Director Dave McPherson provided reports from the Interoperability Montana Project Directors meeting and gave an update on the status of the Sustainability Plan.

The next consortium meeting will begin at 10:00 am at the Butte-Silver Bow Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George St., on Thurs., March 26. Please note that the meeting was pushed back a week so as not to conflict with the 2009 International Wireless Convention and Exposition (IWCE).

Mark Your Calendars to attend the WBIWG

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Mark your calendars for the 2009 Western Border Interoperability Working Group (WBIWG) meeting at the Grouse Mountain Lodge in Whitefish, MT. The meeting will take place on Tuesday, April 21, starting at 8:30 am.

WBIWG meetings offer an opportunity for representatives from Western border states and provinces to interact with each other about radio interoperability issues. This annual get-together provides a platform for federal, state and provincial coordination of public safety communications and technologies with an emphasis on border areas. The group has met annually since 2005.

Room reservations at this beautiful resort are available by calling 800-321-8822. To ensure that you receive the discounted rate of \$78.00 a night, be sure to make your reservations before March 20. Complimentary airline or Amtrak pick-up is available with the hotel shuttle. Plan to spend the weekend prior to the event and enjoy this lovely area. For more information about the lodge, visit: <http://www.grousemountainlodge.com>.

Call for WBIWG Speakers

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The State of Montana's Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB) is hosting this year's Western Border Interoperability Working Group (WBIWG) meeting in Montana on April 21. Speaker slots are still available.

If you or someone you know is interested in presenting, please contact Wing Spooner at espooner@mt.gov or by calling 406-444-2491. Thanks.

Upcoming Meetings

Feb. 23

IM Technical Committee Meeting
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
National Guard Helena Armed Forces Reserve Center (HAFRC) (formerly the Stark Armory)
Corner of N. Last Chance Gulch and Lyndale Ave.

Feb. 24

Western Consortium (WICC)
Missoula • 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
County Courthouse, 200 W. Broadway, DES Office

Feb. 24

Big Sky 11 Consortium
Billings • Technical Committee: 8:30 -10:00 am
• Consortium: 10:00 am – noon
Billings Fire Station #1/EOC - 2300 9th Ave N.

Feb. 25

Eastern Tier (ETIC)
Glendive • 10:00 am
Dawson County Courthouse Community Room
207 W. Bell

Feb. 25

Tri-County Consortium
Helena • 10:00 am
Dept. of Corrections Annex, behind 515 N. Sanders

March 9

IM Finance Committee
Helena • 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Anderson ZurMuehlen
828 Great Northern Blvd.

March 9

IM Governance Committee
Helena • Noon - 5:00 pm
Dept. of Corrections Annex, Behind 515 N. Sanders St.

March 10

IM Project Directors (IMPD) Meeting
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
MACo Large Conference Rm., Lower Level
2715 Skyway Drive

March 11

Central Montana Consortium (CMICC)
Great Falls • 10:00 am
Wheat Building • 750 6th Street S.W.

March 11

South Central Montana Consortium (SCMIC)
White Sulphur Springs • 10:00 am
Sheriff's Training Center, 123 West Crawford